

A Note on Transition Support



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Secretary of Defense
for Warrior Care Policy*

For many Service members, the process of transitioning from military service to civilian life is the hardest part of their military career.

After years—or even decades—in the Service, the civilian world can seem mysterious and overwhelming. And for our wounded, ill, and injured Service members, the adjustment can be even more challenging.

When I left the Marine Corps in 1970, I was fortunate to join a company where a majority of the top executives had served in World War II and Korea. They understood the unique skills and perspectives that veterans can bring. Many of today's corporate leaders do not have military experience, which is why we are working so hard to make the transition from military life to civilian life as smooth and simple as possible.

As Recovery Care Coordinators, you are an integral part of this process. You serve as the expert and the single point of contact, directing Service members and families to the organizations and resources that can best meet their needs. I want to thank you personally for your efforts and dedication.

In this edition of *Training and Development Quarterly*, you will find information about services and programs that can help you support recovering Service members through their transition process. All these resources exist to make your job easier, and I encourage you to take full advantage of them.

All of our recovering Service members deserve as much help and support as we can give them during the often-difficult transition process. Thank you again for all you do to support them during this critical time, and keep up the good work!

Training & Development

SUPPORTING RCCs AS THEY PROVIDE SUPPORT
FOR WARRIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Quarterly

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The Disability Evaluation System



The Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) is the process the Department of Defense (DoD) uses to determine whether an ill or injured Service member can continue their military service.

The IDES integrates the DoD and Veterans Affairs (VA) disability evaluation processes to provide ill or injured Service members with a single set of physical disability examinations conducted by VA, disability ratings prepared by VA, and simultaneous processing by both Departments to ensure the earliest possible delivery of disability benefits.

Both Departments use the disability examination and rating results to make their respective disability and compensation determinations. DoD determines fitness for duty and compensates for conditions causing or contributing to unfitness that were incurred or aggravated in the line

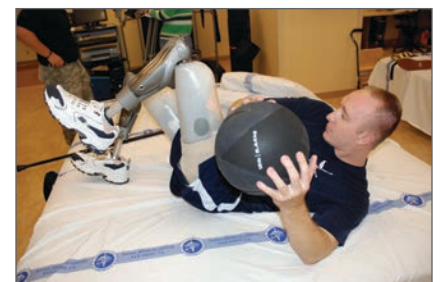


Photo courtesy of: www.dvidshub.net



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Statistics...

...for Recovery Coordination
Program Support Solution
(RCP-SS) 2012

81%

> **User increase**
Q1–Q3 2012

51%

> **Case increase**
Q1–Q3 2012

The Disability Evaluation System, continued from page 1

of duty (*Title 10 United States Code*), while VA compensates for all disabilities incurred or aggravated during military service for which a disability rating of 10 percent or higher is awarded, and establishes eligibility for other VA benefits and services (*Title 38 United States Code*). The IDES requires both Departments to make their disability determinations before DoD separates Service members so that both Departments can provide their respective disability benefits at the earliest point allowed under their respective laws.

One of the most important contacts for Service members/legal guardians throughout the IDES process is the Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer (PEBLO). The PEBLO provides the link between the Service member, the member's Commander, VA, and the IDES. The PEBLO remains an integral part of the process from the point of referral into IDES to the Service member's return to duty or separation from military service.

Not all Service members with medical conditions are referred into the IDES. Service members whose conditions are not severe enough to be evaluated through the IDES may be eligible for and can apply for VA disability compensation and benefits prior to separation through VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge or Quick Start programs, or after separation through VA's traditional disability application process. ■



Assistance Through Transition

Transitions can be very difficult, especially when an individual is dealing with mental health needs in addition to other physical injuries or illnesses.

When your recovering Service member is going through this process, a great resource to call upon is the *inTransition* program. The *inTransition* program is designed to help recovering Service members with mental health needs transition in the most stress-free way possible. The mission of the *inTransition* program is to provide support to “those returning from deployment; those transitioning to or from active duty; Service members separating from the military or

temporarily relocating; wounded warriors transitioning back home following care at Military Treatment Facilities, VA facilities, or Warrior Transition Units and those changing health care systems or providers due to a permanent change of station.”

When Service members are connected with the *inTransition* program, they will be assigned a personal telephonic coach who will empower them, motivate them to stay in treatment, and connect them to the right people, organizations and resources. This coach will be the person to ensure the Service member moves seamlessly through their transition, tying



John Parker Jr., 4, proudly displays a sign celebrating his father's return.

Photo courtesy of: www.dvidshub.net



Photo courtesy of: www.dvidshub.net

up any loose ends and addressing any transition or health care related questions or concerns. According to Mr. George Lamb, the DCoE Outreach Chief for the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, “*inTransition* provides the warm handoff—the coaches are the hands that help connect the Service members to the right treatment or resource destination during transitions.”

The *inTransition* program is available 24/7 and free of charge to all eligible Service members.

For example, if a Service member is having an issue with his treatment or medication plan, he can call his *inTransition* coach and the coach will connect that Service member with the right resource to help them address the issue, answer questions they may have about their treatment and continue on with a successful transition.

The *inTransition* program is available 24/7 and free of charge to all eligible Service members. “The coach is going to find out the best and most convenient way to remain in contact with the Service member

until the program services are no longer needed. The program offers flexibility and Service members are provided the option of maintaining contact through email or phone depending on their availability and schedule” says Lamb. All of the *inTransition* coaches are highly qualified; each has a minimum of a master’s degree as well as clinical staff experience. They are adaptable, accessible, and equipped to provide motivational support tailored to meet the individual needs of each Service member. Information provided to the coaches by the Service member is held in confidence except in situations that require crisis intervention.

Within a short span of two years, the *inTransition* program has become a very helpful resource to many Service members. It has a very high customer satisfaction rating and a 96% Service member acceptance rating. “When

Service members are asked how they became connected with the program, more than half of new enrollment into the program comes from Service members’ self-referral,” Lamb says.

For Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs), *inTransition* is a great resource to have and can be provided to support recovering and transitioning Service members. The toll-free number to make contact to *inTransition* is 800-424-7877. For additional information on the *inTransition* program, visit the Defense Centers of Excellence’s website at www.health.mil/inTransition/. ■

Curriculum Corner

Distance Learning Opportunities

Substance Abuse and Traumatic Brain Injury

http://www.dcoe.health.mil/Training/Monthly_Webinars.aspx

This DCoE course is available on January 24th, 2013, from 1-2:30 p.m. (EST) for Continuing Education (CE) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, then archived for viewing at any time. To obtain CE/CME credits, you must pre-register.

Treating Sleep Problems in PTSD and TBI

http://www.dcoe.health.mil/Training/Monthly_Webinars.aspx

This DCoE course is available on February 23rd, 2013, from 1-2:30 p.m. (EST) for Continuing Education (CE) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, then archived for viewing at any time. To obtain CE/CME credits, you must pre-register.

Identify Concussion/mTBI in Service Members

http://www.dcoe.health.mil/Training/Monthly_Webinars.aspx

This DCoE course is available on March 22, 2013, from 1-2:30 p.m. (EST) for Continuing Education (CE) and Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, then archived for viewing at any time. To obtain CE/CME credits, you must pre-register.

PTSD and Families

<https://mhslearn.csd.disa.mil/learn/en/learner/mhs/portal/mhsstaff.jsp#self>

To access this training select “MHS Learn Catalogs” from the “Browse Catalogs” menu on the left hand side. From there select “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)” from the catalog list.

Select “PTSD and Families” from the course list. Click the “Login” button to launch the course and follow the instructions to view.

If you would like to be placed on the DCoE email list to receive notification and registration information for future courses available please email PR-RCP@osd.mil.

Recovery Coordination Program at a Glance

Education and Employment Initiative (E2I) and Operation Warfighter (OWF)



The Office of Warrior Care Policy (WCP) is committed to helping to reduce unemployment among recovering Service members by assisting in the critical steps associated with returning to active duty, or transitioning to civilian life. To that end, we have established the Education and Employment Initiative (E2I) and Operation Warfighter (OWF) to facilitate a transition to employment as part of the recovering

agencies, and private sector companies in the community to identify education, employment, and internship opportunities at the regional level.

E2I operates with the goal of assisting Service members to engage early in their recovery process to identify skills they have, career opportunities that match those skills, and any additional skills they will need to be successful and participate in desired educational and/or employment opportunities.

The Regional Coordinators who oversee this process collaborate with the Military Departments and the local offices of other Federal agencies to integrate existing

We invite RCCs to support both E2I and OWF by referring eligible Service members to participate. For more information on the referral process and any general inquiries, please send us a message at:

E2Info@osd.mil or

PR-OperationWarFighter@osd.mil.

National Resource Directory (NRD)



Transitioning Service members face a series of challenges as they re-enter civilian life.

Between the paperwork, the logistics and the stress, there can be many overwhelming responsibilities placed on the Service member and family. That's where the National Resource Directory (NRD) comes into play. The NRD can direct transitioning Service members to organizations and programs that can provide significant support.

The National Resource Directory has thousands of resources to help Service members and their families manage the transition as smoothly as possible. For example, the NRD has a folder specifically for the transition from the military to a civilian career. Other key resources include career exploration tools, information about apprenticeships, licensing, credentialing and certification and even resources for military spouses.

And the list goes on! For Service members looking to continue their education, there are resources on the NRD that can

“My internship helped me a lot with overall medical stress. It gave me something to look forward to.”

– SFC Donald Christenson

Service member's rehabilitation lifecycle. These efforts are implemented on a regional basis by E2I and OWF Regional Coordinators, whose primary role is to engage with key stakeholders, Federal

efforts and ensure Service members are guided and supported in their education and employment needs throughout their recovery, rehabilitation and return to duty or ultimate reintegration into successful and productive civilian lives.

Operation Warfighter Program (OWF) is a Federal internship program for wounded, ill, and injured Service members. Participation in OWF is an ideal way for Service members to maximize their recovery time, get valuable work experience, and develop new skills that will be beneficial in their transition to civilian life. An OWF internship can be part of the larger E2I process.



E2I/OWF Team

Top Row, From Left: Yolanda Mose, Jennifer Anderson, Katie Koehler, Christopher DeBatt
Bottom Row, From Left: Denise Anderson, Ms. Sandra Mason

clarify benefit eligibility and facilitate the process. The NRD has a folder dedicated exclusively to VA benefits. The NRD's housing folder offers information and assistance on homelessness, accessible housing, temporary housing, housing locators and more. And with the NRD mobile version, users can access the more than 14,000 resources on the site from the palm of their hand.

Service members are more likely to take advantage of the benefits they are eligible for if they know what they are and what they do. The NRD is available 24/7 to help them do just that; before, during and after transition. ■



Photo courtesy of: Wounded Warrior Regiment

Boots on the Ground



Lt. Sandra Lockett,
Navy Safe Harbor Non-Medical Case Manager

Six months ago, Lt. Lockett had no idea what Navy Safe Harbor was, or what RCCs and non-medical case managers did.

But it wasn't a hard sell. In fact, Lt. Lockett volunteered for the job. She is currently assigned to the VA Polytrauma Center in Tampa, Fla.

“Once I started learning about it I thought, as a health administrator, this is the most rewarding job I could have,” Lockett said.

“It's one of my only chances to interact with the end-user. So I thought I should take my moment while I had it. After this it will be back to a desk and paperwork.”

These days, however, Lt. Lockett spends her time visiting Service members receiving in-patient care and following up with those who have left the hospital and are adjusting to life back at home. The majority of Service members she works with have spinal cord injuries, so a large part of Lt. Lockett's focus is on their long-term care and success once they reach outpatient status.

“It's the best job you could have in the military,” she said. ■

RCP Upcoming Events


E2I/OWF Events at Bethesda (11:00–2:00 p.m.)

16 January
20 February
20 March
17 April
15 May
19 June
17 July
21 August
18 September
16 October

Military Adaptive Sports Program

7–12 January: Army Cycling and Swimming Camp—*San Antonio, TX*
10–14 January: Navy Introduction Clinic—*Norfolk, VA*
22–27 January: Army Track and Field Camp—*Eugene, OR*
4–13 February: Army All Sports Clinic—*Ft. Hood, TX*
25 February–7 March: USMC Marine Corps Trials—*MCB Camp Pendleton, CA*
7–11 March: Navy WG Training Camp—*Pt. Hueneme, CA*
30 March–6 April: VA National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic—*Snowmass Village, CO*

Contact PR-RCP@osd.mil for more information.


 Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) Recovery Care Coordinator (RCC)

Best Practices

When a recovering Service member prepares to separate or retire from active service, a large number of actions are necessary. Most recovering Service members begin focused transition planning once they have completed the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) process.

During this transition period, the recovering Service member is receiving a barrage of guidance. It is more important than ever that all of the steps he/she must take are written out clearly and concisely in a Comprehensive Recovery or Transition Plan (CRP/CTP). In addition, many transition actions have deadlines associated with them. It is extremely important that RCCs are aware of these deadlines and make them clear to the recovering Service member both verbally and in writing.

The ultimate goal for an RCC is to eliminate gaps, prevent delays, and reduce anxiety. This is never truer than during transition.

Things to consider when working with a transitioning recovering Service member include:

- ✓ If the recovering Service member received an IDES rating he/she feels insufficiently compensated for his/her injuries, the RCC should ensure that the Service member has all the information required to appeal or request a reconsideration.
- ✓ If the recovering Service member receives a 30% DoD disability rating, transition planning is even more important. The recovering Service member may have been planning on receiving DoD disability retirement benefits or entitlements that he/she will not qualify for with that rating. Financial planning is important to ensure that the recovering Service member and family is set-up for transition success.
- ✓ Recovering Service members and families, regardless of their disability rating, are eligible for Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) benefits (extended TRICARE for 180 days). Make sure they are aware of this benefit and are registered appropriately.
- ✓ If the recovering Service member has a 10% rating or greater, they may qualify for the Department of Veterans Affairs' vocational rehabilitation program. They should check with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to learn more.
- ✓ The Defense Finance and Accounting Services (DFAS) website has a retirement calculator that can assist a recovering Service member in estimating retirement pay. Recommend that the recovering Service member take a look at DFAS.mil to get a baseline for benefits discussion.
- ✓ Make sure that all benefits forms and applications are filled out and submitted on time. Misspellings or missed deadlines should never be an excuse for a recovering Service member to miss out on a benefit or entitlement.
- ✓ Set expectations for the recovering Service member and family and never predict the outcome of a claim or the level of compensation for a benefit.
- ✓ Always include families in transition planning. Processes are complex and it will always benefit the recovering Service member to have support comprehending and remembering important information.
- ✓ RCCs cannot successfully transition a recovering Service member alone. Make sure that the Recovery Team is informed and that all transition efforts are coordinated and synchronized.
- ✓ Successfully transitioning a recovering Service member is incredibly important to a RCC's mission—quite possibly the most important



VA Trains, Supports Caregivers

When a Service member sustains a serious wound, illness or injury his or her life is often changed forever, and those changes extend to a Service member's family as well.

In addition to supporting and advocating for Service members as they go through the phases of recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration, many family members also become caregivers to wounded

Once a wounded, ill, or injured Service member has a medical discharge date from the military, he or she can apply for the VA Caregiver program.

warriors. Being aware of programs that provide training and support for family caregivers will help RCCs provide the best assistance possible to Service members and their families.

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs recognize that having a caregiver in the home environment can enhance the health and well-being of Service members and veterans recovering from, or dealing with, wounds, illnesses and injuries. As such, both Departments have developed programs to assist caregivers.

While a Service member is still on active duty, he or she may be eligible for Special Compensation for Assistance With Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL), a DoD benefit that provides eligible Service members with a taxable stipend that can

be used to off-set the cost of home care. Once a wounded, ill, or injured Service member has a medical discharge date from the military, he or she can apply for the VA Caregiver program. Information about eligibility for the VA program, as well as an application form, can be found at www.caregiver.va.gov or by contacting VA's Caregiver Support Line a 1-855-260-3274. Many Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) have VA staff, VA Liaisons for Healthcare, co-located with military Case Managers. VA Liaisons can also assist in providing information about VA's Program and assist in the application process.

Financial compensation is only one part of the support caregivers require and deserve. In addition to the financial strain many caregivers experience as a result of lost income due to increased responsibilities at home, many caregivers also experience increased stress or anxiety, sleep deprivation, less time exercising, poor eating habits, weight loss or gain, depression and delaying their personal health care needs.

Through the VA Caregiver Program, family caregivers receive specialized training to better prepare them for the unique demands of caregiving and to recognize common conditions and symptoms. This training is currently provided by the Easter Seals organization, and can be completed in person, online, or through a DVD and workbook. If other specific training needs

are identified, the support network will coordinate with the veteran, caregiver, and care team to ensure the need is met. Access to a network of professional and peer caregivers also reduces isolation and gives caregivers options for their own respite needs. This network includes Caregiver Support Coordinators (CSCs), located at all VA Medical Centers. CSCs can assist veterans and caregivers in applying for new benefits, in addition to organizing caregiver-focused activities and services and ensuring that caregiver sensitivity is integrated into all programs.

As part of the application process, home visits are conducted to ensure the veteran and caregiver can manage care at home and have everything they need to be successful. Well-being checks are conducted every 90 days, or as clinically directed.

Caregivers receive a direct payment, based on the wages of a home health aide in the geographic area where the veteran resides, and tiered based on the amount and degree of personal care services provided.

In a time of often difficult and sometimes confusing transition, the VA Caregiver Program and other similar programs are invaluable in helping Service members and their families get on their feet, and stay there. ■



Photo courtesy of: www.davidshub.net

Our Military Kids Grant



Sixteen-year-old Gabby Douglas was the recipient of an Our Military Kids grant that paid for her to attend a gymnastics camp with Team USA.



Gabby's father is a Staff Sergeant in the Air National Guard and has deployed overseas three times. Thanks in part to this grant, Gabby developed her talent and became a member of the 2012 U.S. Women's Olympic Gymnastics team.

Gabby became the fourth American woman to win gold in the all-around competition, and won a team gold as well. Congratulations to Our Military Kids for helping Gabby's dream come true and to Gabby Douglas for reaching the gold in the 2012 Summer Olympics! ■

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Leading by Learning



Ms. Barbara Wilson, Director of Training, Recovery Coordination Program

Webster defines transition as movement, passage, or change from one position, state or stage of life to another. Recovering Service members and their families/caregivers provide all of us with awe-inspiring examples of transition and the many challenges and successes associated with it.

During the continuum of care, transition is different for each recovering Service member and their family/caregiver. It can mean transitioning from inpatient to outpatient status, or starting rehabilitation. Transition can also mean becoming a veteran and starting a new job in the civilian community, or returning to duty. No matter what type of transition recovering Service members experience, you play a vital role in their success. This is why it's important that you learn about the people, organizations, programs, initiatives and resources available to make each Service member's transition a smooth one. But you have to go a step further than making a phone call or sending an email; follow up again and again if necessary.

We hope this edition of the Training & Development Quarterly has provided you with actionable information that will assist you in supporting those who deserve it the most, our recovering Service members and their families/caregivers.



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